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ABSTRACT

The role of Vista College, a non-campus college in the San Francisco Bay area, is discussed in this paper with respect to its provision of courses and programs in international business education. After section I describes the college and its location, students, and programs, section II makes a case for the importance of international business education in an increasingly interrelated and interdependent world. Section III discusses international trade and the role of California's community colleges in developing international and multicultural curricula. Section IV highlights the objectives of Vista's International Business and Cross-Cultural Program in providing educational opportunities in international trade, establishing networks among business and educational institutions, and providing direct services to business. After Section V describes the administration and staffing of the International Business Program, the international aspects of the curriculum are outlined in section VI, including a description of the Certificate in International Trade program, the non-credit community services program of workshops and seminars for business people, and the college's language laboratory. Sections VII and VIII discuss student placement and the educational impact of the programs. The final sections briefly outline future plans and identify a contact person for the programs. (HB)

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INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM: MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL COMPETITION

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V I S T A C O L L E G E

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL COMPETITION

I. ABOUT THE COLLEGE

As one of seven noncampus colleges in the United States, Vista offers over 600 classes each semester in more than 250 locations that are scattered throughout six cities in the East Bay area: in senior citizen centers, corporate lunchrooms and boardrooms, public libraries, banks, churches, convalescent homes, post offices, and on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Classes are often offered in partnership with the organization that supplies the college with rent-free classroom space. The adults who enroll in Vista classes are not conventional college students. They are older (average age is 44), skill-oriented, discriminating educational consumers who combine their educational activities with the demands and responsibilities of working and raising families. Centralized personnel, registration, counseling and other administrative services are provided by a small full-time staff housed in a Berkeley office building. Students generally are able to attend classes near their homes or places of employment.

The college's instructional menu includes formal lecture/discussion courses, computer assisted classes, newspaper and television courses, field trips, independent study, and self-paced learning activities. Almost all of the college's teaching assignments are handled by a large group (300) of creative, competent part-time faculty.

The college offers associate degree and occupational certificate programs in American Sign Language, several Business Management and Supervision areas, Community Social Services, Gerontology, Energy and Environmental Technology,

Travel, and Transportation. Vista College, one of five Peralta Colleges (College of Alameda, Laney, Merritt, Feather River), is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

II. MAKING THE CASE FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION

"Interdependence," "global economy," "intercultural awareness," "international education," terms new to the national awareness in the early 1960's and 1970's, are common cliches in the 1980's. In a more generic sense, these terms combined describe a condition of mutual dependence and the various types of educational and cultural relations among nations. International education originally applied to formal education, but the term has now broadened to include governmental cultural relations programs, the promotion of mutual understanding among nations, educational assistance to underdeveloped regions, cross cultural education, and international communications.

J. Paul Sticht, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of R. J. Reynolds Industries, adds a more contemporary dimension to these terms and provides a concise rationale for the recent importance which international elements of business and business education has taken on. In his recent address to the 1981 graduating class of Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, Sticht offers the following:

> Visualize, if you will, a map of the world with all of the national boundaries clearly delineated. Lying atop the map, however, is a transparent overlay. On this overlay, sweeping across neat, national boundaries, are powerful economic, social and technological forces. Regional and sub-regional organizations come together to address common interest which transcend political division. And crosscutting both national and regional divisions are the transnational private activities of multinational corporations. I believe it is important to your future and to the future well-being of our country that you understand the implications of interdependency and the hope that it brings for resolution of global problems.

There is growing acceptance of this view by community college educators as evidenced by the recent number of colleges participating in international consortium activities in various parts of the country. Many recent articles on the theme of international or global education express an urgency for educational leaders at the lower division levels to encourage and foster international education programs across the curriculum.

III. INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The State of California and indeed the San Francisco-Bay Area's cosmopolitan image is based on a wide variety of cultures and nationalities that visit and have settled here, and, secondly, on the fact that it is an important center for international trade, particularly with countries along the Pacific Rim. For example, the Port of Oakland-San Francisco ranks as the nation's fifth largest customs district and is the largest containerized port of its kind on the West Coast, and is the biggest business in the East Bay, having created some 25,000 jobs.

Yet, the image can mask the narrow breadth and shallow depth of understanding of area and state residents about international and multicultural issues. Through Vista's work on the International Trade Institute, local business, education, and government leaders have expressed their concerns about the educational needs for employees and citizens who lack intercultural communication skills, are insensitive to cultural differences, and fail to see the importance of international trade and of global perspectives on the environment, energy, and nuclear issues. The traditional community college curriculum, like its counterparts in other educational institutions, has typically overlooked international and multicultural perspectives.

To date, no concentrated effort has been made across the community colleges in the State of California and in the Bay Area to develop new

international curriculum or to infuse existing curriculum with units that address international issues. Non-profit organizations such as the World Affairs Council, the Bay Area and the World Project (now de-funded), and Global Perspectives at Stanford University have only been able to provide occasional seminars on specific international issues for a wide range of educators and the public. But they have not been able to address the specific curricular needs of the California Community Colleges. When an occasional course is developed or modified at a community college to address international and multicultural issues, other campuses are generally unaware of its relevance to their program and the potential for articulation is lost.

Efforts to internationalize community college curricula have begun in scattered areas of the country. This writer, acting as the Director of Vista's International Trade Institute, established strong ties with the leading community colleges in the field including Middlesex and Bergen Colleges in New Jersey, Broward and Valencia in Florida, and Pima in Arizona. In Southern California, Harbor Community College and Long Beach City College have just begun an International Curriculum Project.

Even though the San Francisco Bay Area is rich in multinational business, educational, and personal ties, many businesses and residents, like their counterparts throughout the country, have only had passive interest in and a superficial understanding of the growing internationalization of the American economy. The potental resources in the Bay Area for increased international trade, particularly in the Pacific Rim countries, have remained untapped for the vast majority of local businesses, employees, and new job-seekers. Statistics which show that 80% of America's exports can be accounted for by only 10% of its businesses

dramatize the need to make more businesses, particularly small and medium size businesses (i.e., under 500 employees), aware of the opportunities for exportation and to help them be operationally efficient and competitive in the world marketplace.

Moreover, international trade plays a very significant economic, cultural, and social role in the State of California. If the state were a separate country, it would rank twelfth in terms of international trade value, eighth in terms of gross domestic product, and seventh in the world in terms of per capita gross domestic products. Recent economic studies of the state's international trade picture by the Department of Commerce revealed that over 15 percent of all non-governmental jobs in California, and possibly 10 percent in the Bay Area, are related to international trade.

IV. HOW ORGANIZED

Vista Community College's International Business and Cross-Cultural Program was made possible through a Federal grant (1983) by the Office of Education and other private and public sector support to establish an International Trade Institute. The objectives of the Institute are:

* To provide educational opportunities in international trade and understanding of foreign languages and cultures to nontraditional students:

* To establish information and service networks among educational institutions and local businesses:

* To provide direct services that will assist business and will also help the Institute grow and become self-supporting: and

* To develop and present special low-cost, one-day Saturday or Sunday international trade seminars and workshops for people who must work weekdays.

Although the program focuses on providing a comprehensive array of international business courses (credit program), including self-paced

language instruction in 3 Pacific Rim tongues (Korean, Mandarin, Japanese), and a broader understanding of culture through individualized language and cross cultural skills, it also offers a variety of workshops, seminars, minicourses, consular corp activities, roundtables, internships and brown-bag lunch activities to meet the needs of specific groups. Most of our low-fee activities are offered in cooperation with the Community Services Division.

V. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFFING

The international Business Program operates under Vista College's Division of Business, Business Management, and Transportation. The program is headed by the Assistant Dean of Instruction for the division. The staff includes a full-time Staff Assistant, various international trade practitioners and consultants, 10 part-time faculty (international trade practitioners), a resource librarian, and a number of student assistants.

The International Trade Advisory Board plays a crucial role in guiding the development of the program. The Advisory Board membership includes over 50 representatives of all major public and private sectors engaged in international trade. The Chairperson of the Board is Patrick Ryan, Deputy Assistant to the Executive Director of the Port of Oakland. Because of the size of the Advisory Board, there are several working committees of about 6 members which are organized around distinct areas such as executive policy and funding issues; foreign language instruction; and new programs and course development. The Program's first year budget was $139,000 with two-thirds generated by the Office of Education and the remainder from the college and local business contributions.

VI. INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

The International Business Program was developed primarily by concentrating its services at the business operations level for students pursuing new careers, for experienced business people wanting to improve and expand their capabilities in international trade, and for the general public and college communities to become familiar with diverse cultures, global issues and business oriented foreign languages.

The Certificate in International Trade consists of 20 units. The program includes several short-term skills oriented courses and an internship program which provides practical learning opportunities for students to work in the international trade field with local businesses. The certificate program consists of the following courses: Introduction to International Trade (.5 unit); International Trade Procedures (3 units); Careers in International Trade (.5 unit); Intercultural Aspects of International Trade (2 units); International Trade and Economics of the East Bay (1.5 units); International Marketing (3 units); International Trade Finance (3 units); The Basics of Import/Export (.5 unit); Establishing an Export Trading Company (1 unit); International Letters of Credit (1.5 units); Introduction to Business Law (3 units); Using a Small Computer/ Data Base Management (1 unit). These units may also apply toward the Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration. Approximately 300 students are enrolled in this Certificate Program.

The non-credit Community Services Program consists of a series of financially self-supporting, one-day weekend workshops and seminars for business-oriented people on topics such as a Far East Trade Workshop; Introduction to International Trade; How to Start Your Own Export/Import Business; Psychology of International Advertising, Marketing, and Sales;

Basics of Hi-Tech International Trade. These seminars are extremely successful and attract between 50-150 business persons. The fee ranges between $35-65 with a 30% discount to educational institutions.

Another outstanding feature of the International Business Program includes monthly informal mid-day Roundtables that bring together business people and educators to discuss the practical concerns of those entering and those involved in International Trade; and Consular Corps Evenings that provide opportunities for business people and foreign representatives to discuss current opportunities for trade and promote international understanding. These programs have been extremely popular and have drawn between 50-100 attendees from diverse career and educational backgrounds.

One of the most exciting and unique features of the curriculum is the International Trade Institute's language laboratory. This program is offered on a self-paced, drop-in basis and caters to the needs of individuals and local businesses engaged in international trade by being able to provide immediate short-term conversational business-oriented language instruction and review. Therefore, employees and small business owners, who may need to acquire minimal or "survival" linguistic competence on short notice, are availing themselves of the Institute's language laboratory alone, or in conjunction with the Institute's seminars and regular courses. Native language instructional aides are also made available to users of the laboratory on a regular basis.

One of the more saleable features is the program's emphasis on teaching practical business usage of the major Pacific Rim languages. Local business owners and employees are able to learn job-relevant skills which they might otherwise believe to be too time-consuming or esoteric. A simple pamphlet of traveler's and business related phrases and vocabulary

is made available to students in all four target languages, along with audio cassettes and visual aids.

The Internship program has been another successful activity of the International Business Program. It provides students with first-hand experiences in businesses actively involved in international trade. This linkage of the education community (the nontraditional students and educators in both business and language) with the practioners in International Trade (Representing public and private sectors large and small businesses, producers, and service providers) brings together a combination of talent, experience, and commitment to improve America's economic standing in the International marketplace. Approximately 10% of our students are enrolled in this program.

VII. PLACEMENT

Although no coordinated placement is presently provided, many students achieve their employment on an individual basis. The program has extensive contact with the local international community, and plans are underway to set up a formal business placement role for the Advisory Committee.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

The active involvement and commitment of the local international business community as evidenced by the participation of over 50 members on the Advisory Board, representing small businesses as well as major banks; manufacturers; international trade commissions and associations; air and ship transport companies; federal and state agencies; universities and schools, demonstrates the need for international education at the Community College level.

These programs, as well as the roundtables, have been extremely popular and provide very practical opportunities to provide linkages between

the business community; state, federal, and foreign agencies; and educators. Several requests for one-day workshops in outlying Bay Area communities have been received. A strong point made by numerous attendees has been the importance of presenting such sessions during non-business hours.

Additionally, a major International Business Survey is underway with the participation of some 3,000 international businesses in the community.

IX. FUTURE PLANS

Plans are underway to:

-- Seek Refunding and Corporate Donations

-- Summarize Needs Assessment

-- Establish Linkages With State, Local, Federal Education Associations Involved in International Trade

-- Development of International Business Resource Center Providing New Range of Services for the Business Community.

X. CONTACT PERSON

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